

ATEL Committee Meeting

Public Utilities Commission

March 8, 2012

9:00 AM

Attendees:

Roberta Greene Whittemore, Denise Corson, James Litvack, , Ellen Lenox Smith , Jim Lanni , Charles Brown, Harry Mancoll , Pam Kling, Melissa Rosenberg, Laura Peterson and Cart Reporter.

- 1. The Interpreter that was originally scheduled for the meeting again cancelled due to another commitment. CART services were automatically scheduled.**
- 2. Minutes will be reviewed at next meeting.**
- 3. Committee Update ¡V The Governor has renewed Doris Simas, James Litvack, Ellen Smith, and Harry Mancoll, as well as appointed Counrtenay Petracca to replaced Sean Gill position. The Committee suggested contacting representative Naughton to suggest a candidate for the last vacancy, the Senate position.**
- 4. Legislative Update- Jim Lanni sent Repr. Naughton, the ATEL Committee proposed draft for a bill to allow ATEL to over wireless telephone devices; thereafter, Representatives Naughton, E Coderre, Handy, and Keable introduced bill H 7540 on February 15, 2012. Per Jim Lanni, the bill will be heard by the Health, Education & Welfare House Committee. Unfortunately, there might not be much notice when it will be heard, so Jim stated that he will try to stay on top of**

the bill being heard in committee. The ATEL Committee advised that we should make sure when we testify that we let the committee know that this will not increase expenses associated with the bill, that there is an income restriction on our program of individuals must make below 250% of the poverty line and currently there is a federal program in place that offers wireless cell device to RI residents that are below 150% of the poverty line; however, this program is designed to service the general population, not individuals with disabilities since you are issue a basic wireless device that may not be compatible with the needs of the individual with a disability. Also, many other state programs are now offering wireless programs. Denise has begun working on a list of programs that are currently offering wireless services. Furthermore, Denise stated that everyone she has spoken to has supported the need to change the legislation to support wireless technology, including Steve Brunero, Steve Florio, Tina Thompson, and Jeanne Panarace. Denise was advised not to send a letter to the Chairpersons of the Health, Education & Welfare House Committee due to possibly being construed as lobbying; therefore, James Litvack has sent a letter of support as ATEL Committee Chair. Denise has also contacted other State organizations requesting their support of the bill, and writing a letter or testifying before the committee. Also, Steve Florio is proposing legislation thru the CDHH to improve communication efficiency between emergency and the Deaf and HOH population by receiving direct emergency messages in emergency situations through both English and ASL, by legislating that 80K be annually remitted to the

CDHH by the PUC from the telephone surcharge; approximately 40K would be allocated to new personnel to run the program.

5. Audiologist CapTel Program ¶ Most of ATEL's outreach efforts have been to Senior Centers and Elderly complexes, yet we get very few attendees; therefore, we thought a better approach, would be through RI Audiologists offices. Since Tech ACCESS has a loaner library with CapTel devices, we decided to provide a free CapTel Loan and Training Program for RI Audiologist Offices; there are 5 CapTels available for 3 month loans, on a first come, first serve basis. Thereby, we familiarize Audiologists with the CapTel technology, and also have their clients be able to see if it is a device their clients might be interested in. We have placed our first Captel at the URI Speech and Hearing clinic in Kinston, RI. Laura and James both have a contact at the VA that they will discuss this program. Another suggestion was to contact Vikki Ferrara at the Sherlock Center to see if she is interested in the program.

6. Network RI Update- the program to have Captels located at the 5 (soon to be 4) Network RI locations was approved by Vincent Rossi, and will take place in the next few months.

7. Rhode Island Speech, Language, Hearing Association (RISHA) State Conference ¶ Laura is now a board member of the Speech-Language Pathology advisory council for the American Speech Language Hearing Association, and presents the needs of the state of Rhode Island's professional speech-language community and the individuals they serve to the executive leadership of their national ASHA organization. Laura asked if ATEL and/or ATAP want to exhibit

its services at a table at the upcoming MARCH 31st Rhode Island Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (RISHA) State Conference meeting on Saturday, March 31st at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. One theme for the day from our experienced professional speakers will be use of I-PAD technology for individuals with communication disorders. There may be other exhibitors of technology at tables as well, demonstrating clinical uses of augmentative technology <http://www.risha.info/conference-app.htm> . Denise is unavailable to attend, but will ask if Courtenay is attending for Hamilton and can display ATEL info; also, Roberta will check to see if ATAP is attending and if not will get a table to display ATEL literature.

8. Open Discussion-

„« Cox Communications Update- Joe was unable to attend the meeting, but informed Denise that their marketing department has been going through many organizational changes in the past few months and many are currently transitioning to new direct reports. Therefore, it has been very difficult to get any new procedures or campaigns approved or completed. Unfortunately, the Captel project we have been working on has been placed on the back burner or even possibly stopped all together. However, there is something in the works that will provide a discount off of our data product to low income customers who qualify.

„« Meeting time - James wanted to know if 9:30 AM would be a better time for our meeting; however, the committee decided to keep the start time at 9 AM.

„« Interpreter Services ¡V since interpreters have not been able to be scheduled for the last 3 meetings, Denise suggested that we use Cart services, and maybe be able to accommodate more individuals on our committee that are HOH. The Committee agreed and Denise will ask Courtenay whether Hamilton has any problem paying for CART Services instead of Interpreter Services.

9. The time and date of this year¡s quarterly meetings is scheduled at 9AM- 11AM at the PUC on Thursday, June 7, 2012, September 13, 2012, and December 6, 2012.